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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvia)

SUBJECT Refutation of Aviation Magazine Report of a Rocket Range
at Gibka, Latvian SSR.PLACE ACQUIRED
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- "The Swedish daily Dagens Nyheter, quoting from the US magazine Aviation, said in its issue of 17 Aug 53 that the Soviets had built at Gibka near Riga a rocket weapon range for eventual firing on the Swedish town of Kiruna, the well-known iron-ore mining centre.
- "Latvian experts in Sweden do not believe that there is such a thing at Gibka. Gibka is a village with a lighthouse in the Dundaga commune opposite the Estonian island of Saaremaa on the Strait of Irbera. In 1939, when 'mutual assistance pacts' were concluded between the USSR and the three Baltic states, the Soviets had a base at Pitruks in the Dundaga commune. They built a series of coastal fortifications from Pitruks to Ventspils (Windau), which included Gibka.
- "During the German occupation (1941-1944) in the spring of 1943, the inhabitants of a coastal area of 400 square kilometres in the Dundaga commune, including the villages of Gibka and Kolka, were evacuated, mainly to Kuldiga. The measure affected 300 farms with about 1500 inhabitants. Officially it was said that the evacuated territory was to become a training ground for SS-troops. It was deforested and some work was started there, the manpower being supplied mainly by Jews from Czechoslovakia, Soviet ~~Prisoners~~, and a little free labor. There were rumors that underground submarine shelters were to be built there (the coast is high and of sandstone). Other rumors said that the Germans proposed to use Kolka as a target in testing rocket projectiles fired at Peenemunde. However, nothing of the kind happened. The labor force was used mainly for cutting timber and building a few barracks and concrete bases for guns.
- "In 1945, when the Soviets occupied Latvia, they deported some more of Dundaga's population, mainly to the Far East, settling them in fishing kolkhozes. But the Dundaga commune was not a closed area as late as summer 1952, according to accounts of refugees who had travelled there. Rocket ranges, however, presuppose a large closed area and the firing noise could not be kept secret from the local population."

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